

Report on Research Compliance Volume 18, Number 6. May 20, 2021 RRC E-Alerts: May 6, 2021

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Senate Committee Holds Confirmation Hearing for OSTP Nominee

Following a confirmation hearing on April 30, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee expects to vote sometime later this month on the nomination of Eric Lander, director of the Broad Institute, to be the new director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). The committee will hold the record open until May 13 to accept additional comments and questions for Lander, after which time a vote will be scheduled. The nomination will then move to the full Senate for approval. This marks the first time an OSTP leader faces confirmation, as President Biden elevated the job to the cabinet level. In his opening statement, Lander stressed the need for more science, technology, engineering and math education, saying most Americans “lack access to great STEM schools.”

He vowed that the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, part of OSTP, “will be the most diverse in history,” that “OSTP’s staff will look like America, including identifying extraordinary women and people of color as candidates in every search,” and that its work “will be rooted in equity—tackling issues from STEM inclusion to algorithmic bias.” Lander added that he will “work to put in place a plan to increase the numbers of women and underrepresented people in the science and technology professions by 50%.” Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Mississippi, said Lander will need to “submit a report on federal government research and development investments, infrastructure, and workforce development,” including a “blueprint for boosting annual spending in this area to \$10 billion by 2025,” as required under the Industries of the Future Act, passed during the last session of Congress. According to a news report, Lander also faced questions about allegations that he has been “dismissive or insensitive to women and people of color,” about the fact that he offered a toast to James Watson, and, in the words of Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Illinois, about his meetings “with the late disgraced Jeffrey Epstein.”

[Link to hearing](#)

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